

Good morning, Chairman Wilson and members of the House Business & Labor Committee. I am Representative Dee Brown from House District 3 in the Flathead Valley, commonly known as the grizzly and huckleberry capital of Montana on the west side of Glacier Park.

I am introducing HB148 which is a bill to address an area of work comp that small businesses in my area felt was needed. Page 2 and the top of page 3 were simply changes made by staff when they discovered the language in this code was not in alphabetical order. My additions to language are on page 3, lines 6 through 10.

Our work comp rates are the second highest in the nation, due in many cases to the very types of work we as Montanans do—outside cutting the trees, digging in the ground, pumping the oil—all very different from sitting in a cubicle behind a computer screen in a safe office in Metropolitan, U.S.A.

Should a woman leaving her workplace to feed her cat on an employee break be covered by workers' comp when she slips on the ice and breaks her arm at home? I don't think this should qualify, but be under homeowner's insurance or another source of help—not at the expense of the employer and a business insurance pool.

As more and more businesses struggle during the downturn of the economy in our nation and state, we need to be very clear in Montana code that work comp should be used only for employees doing their jobs and NOT when they are off premise doing private business.

I urge a 'do pass' on HB148 Chairman Wilson and members of the House Business & Labor Committee and reserve the right to close. Thanks for listening.

*Dee Brown*  
*HD 3*  
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